

Most of the parking areas in the commercial core are privately owned. They are usually located on the interior of blocks and vary considerably regarding the nature and the extent of their use. Some of them are large, while others are small; some of them are paved and organized while some others are unpaved and disorganized. Many of these spaces are only open to customers and employees of specific establishments.

The need for parking is generally determined on the basis of floor space. The combined floor space for both retail and service uses in the core area is 582,455 square feet. An area of approximately 518,700 square feet is devoted to parking at the present time. The generally accepted method for determining required parking space is to use a ratio of two feet of parking area for each square foot of retail or service area. On the basis of this, there now exists a deficit of 656,210 square feet of parking area. However, it must be pointed out that this is a very conservative estimate and that shopping centers often provide three to four times as much space for parking as for retail activity. Considerable amount of reorganization of existing space is also needed to insure the most efficient use.

PHYSICAL DECAY

Another major problem is that of intensified physical decay resulting from the mixed land uses on the edges of the core area. Dilapidated residential dwellings in the south end of the core area mingle freely with the commercial activities, and thereby, hinder development of better properties on that end of the core area. Added to this are the existing non-central area type uses such as industrial and wholesale activities, all of which contribute to the deterioration of the area. This has given a somewhat unattractive appearance to the south end of the core area.

The architecture of the entire central commercial district is unimaginative and drab. Other than Steele Street where the maximum concentration of retail activities takes place, most streets present a cluttered view of overhanging signs, billboards, utility poles and wires, and sidewalk awnings. There have been few attempts at properly landscaping the area.